

Help! I think my child is being bullied



Fact:

More than one in five children is bullied regularly at school.

Bullying is a hot topic of discussion in the media, schools, playgrounds and homes around the world. Attend any playgroup, mother's group or staff meeting and it's sure to come up in conversation.

Parents are faced with the great responsibility of trying to protect and prepare their children for what they may encounter in the school yard, and teachers are faced with the challenge of creating a safe and bully-free environment in which children can play and learn.

Not my child!

Every parent wants what is best for their child. We want them to feel loved, nurtured and safe. We want them to be happy, laugh often, be self-confident, self-assured and enjoy every moment of their precious life.

So what do you do when your child displays the complete opposite behavior? How do you cope when your child is in tears and tells you that they don't want to go to preschool because:

No one wants their child to be a victim of bullying, and certainly no one wants to hear that their child has been bullying others. As parents and educators, we have a responsibility to socialise children and equip them with the skills and knowledge they need to survive and thrive throughout their childhood years. Children who bully need just as much guidance and support as those who are bullied.

At Lessons 4 Life we believe that early education and communication is the key.

- they 'don't have any friends'
- 'the other children are mean'
- 'they feel sick in the tummy' (with fear and nerves)
- 'the other kids say they are ugly/dumb/weird'
- 'the other kids hurt them'
- 'no one likes them'
- 'preschool makes them cry'?

"I don't want to go to preschool today. Blake makes me sad all the time"
(Chloe, aged 3)

"I don't like it when friends say mean things. They shouldn't do that. It makes people sad." (Jade, aged 4)

"A bully is someone who hates you. They hit you until you cry."
(Craig, aged 5)



"Making the decision to have a child - it's momentous. It is to decide forever to have your heart go walking outside your body..." Elizabeth Stone



Reassure your child that it is not their fault and that the bullying behavior is not ok.

Tips to help a child who is being bullied

Provide reassurance

- Reassure your child that you are there for them. You are their support and you will help them deal with the problem so they can feel safe and happy again.
- Reassure your child that it is not their fault and that the bullying behavior is not ok.
- Reassure your child that you are committed to helping them and that it is important to you.
- Reassure your child that they are not alone and that their feelings of pain/sadness/sickness/fear are normal.

Acknowledge their pain

- Acknowledge that there is a problem and praise them for talking to you about it.
- Do not shrug off the situation as being minor or make negative statements such as 'You have to learn how to be tougher. Stand up for yourself. You're too soft.'
- Let them know that you would feel the same way if you were in their situation.

Communicate

- Discuss the situation openly with your child.
- Listen to everything your child has to say and obtain as much information about the situation as you can.
- Discuss what the child should do if the situation occurs again? How should they respond, who should they tell and so on.
- Role-play different scenarios or conversations with your child to teach them how to handle bullying from other children.
- Commit to and prioritize ongoing, distraction free communication with your child.

Talk to the teacher/carer

- Most pre-schools and childcare centres have a 'no-bully' policy. Discussing the situation allows them to work with you to address the problem.
- The preschool or centre may ask you to work with them by applying different strategies in the home. Cooperate with them and openly discuss any concerns you have.

Get involved

- Know what's going on in your child's life. Get actively involved in their environment. Teachers and coaches welcome parents who are active in their children's school and extracurricular activities and they can prove to be advocates for your child.
- Encourage supervised play dates with other children so you can observe their behavior and interaction with others.
- Encourage your child to participate in activities and explore interests that will increase their self-esteem and confidence.

Seek professional help

- If the situation is beyond a level you feel confident handling, seek external help. Your child's medical practitioner, counselor or teacher can get you in touch with the right people.

Smother with LOVE

- Smother your child with love, support and empathy to ensure that they develop a strong sense of self and thrive throughout their childhood years and into the future.

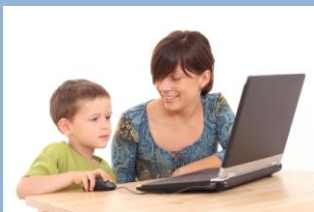
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Sometimes the responsibility of being a parent can be overwhelming. Knowing what to say and making the right decisions all of the time is a challenge that all parents face.

No parent wants to hear that their child is being bullied, and for some parents, it can be even worse to find out that their child is the bully.

The good news is, you have not failed as a parent, and you are certainly not alone. Help is readily available and now is the best time to take action.

We have provided you with some useful tips to get started. Remember that each child and situation is unique. Apply the steps that you think will work best for your child and remember to seek professional help if the situation does not improve.



Contact

For more information about Lessons 4 Life or to view a free demonstration of our interactive learning resource on bullying, please refer to our website:

www.kidslessons4life.com

Please forward any queries to:

info@kidslessons4life.com

We welcome your feedback and any success stories you have in combating bullying behavior with your child or in your school.

About Lessons 4 Life

Lessons 4 Life produce interactive multimedia learning resources for children that address important social issues.

The resources are designed to engage the child in a hands-on learning experience that causes them to think about life, behavior, feelings and consequences, while at the same time, engaging them in important conversation with an adult.

Throughout the Lessons 4 Life resources, parents/teachers are provided with useful tips and conversation starters. They are also given access to:

- FREE user guide containing information on how to maximize the child's learning experience
- FREE follow-up questions and activities
- FREE support material and downloads from the website.

For more information about our multimedia learning resources for children, or to view a free demonstration, please refer to:

Website

www.kidslessons4life.com



*"No matter how calmly you try to referee, parenting will eventually produce bizarre behavior, and I'm not talking about the kids. Their behavior is always normal."
-- Bill Cosby*

